



Report on Political Participation of mobile EU Citizens

Denmark

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Publication date:
2018

Document version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Citation for published version (APA):

Hansen, K. M. (2018). *Report on Political Participation of mobile EU Citizens: Denmark*. European University Institute. Country Report Vol. 2018 No. 4



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COUNTRY
REPORT
2018/04

SEPTEMBER
2018

REPORT ON POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF MOBILE EU CITIZENS: DENMARK

AUTHORED BY
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This report was funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)

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Global Citizenship Observatory (GLOBALCIT)
Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies
in collaboration with
Edinburgh University Law School

Report on Political Participation of Mobile EU Citizens: Denmark
RSCAS/GLOBALCIT-PP 2018/4
September 2018

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Printed in Italy
European University Institute
Badia Fiesolana
I – 50014 San Domenico di Fiesole (FI)

www.eui.eu/RSCAS/Publications/
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GLOBALCIT studies political participation in the context of the project Fostering Awareness, Inclusion and Recognition of EU mobile citizens' Political Rights (FAIR EU) and as a part of the EU-CITIZEN network.

This report was funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020).

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Report on Political Participation of Mobile EU Citizens

Denmark

*Kasper M. Hansen**

Abstract:

Non-citizen residents from the EU have the right to vote and stand as candidates in local and European Parliament elections but voter registration is automatic only in local elections. Eligible EU citizens are facing some obstacles in terms of limited information about European Parliament, local and regional elections, especially information in other languages than Danish. Information in English is available. A possible facilitator is provision of information in English and mobile polling stations that reach non-nationals, especially from 'newer' EU Member States, at their work place. And SMS messages in English directly to the eligible voters.

Non-resident Danish citizens do not have the right to vote and stand as candidates in national elections if not added to the voter file. The voter registration is not automatic. Moreover, it is difficult to mobilize this group of voters given the lack of knowledge about their turnout and location. A possible solution could be to provide more information through embassies and expat-organizations.

Abstrakt:

Statsborgere fra EU-lande har valget ved danske EU parlamentsvalg, kommunal- og regionsvalg og dermed også mulig for at være opstillet. Vælgerregistreringen er automatisk, med undtagelse af EP-valg hvor man søger om at komme på valglisten. Stemmeberettigede EU borgere møder enkelte barrierer for deltagelse i valgene, som hovedsagelig drejer sig om mangel på information i andre sprog end dansk. Der findes dog information på bl.a. Engelsk. Mere information i engelsk kunne hjælpe yderligere, kombineret med mobile valgsteder på deres arbejdspladser and SMS opfordring direkte sendt til de stemmeberettigede.

Danske statsborgere i udlandet har ikke stemmeberettiget ved danske valg, med mindre de er optaget på valglisten. Optagelse på valglisten sker efter ansøgning. Der findes meget begrænset information om denne gruppe størrelse og valgdeltagelse.

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1. Introduction

Generally, non-resident Danish citizens do not have the right to vote and to stand as candidates in national and European Parliament elections (see Table 1). In national elections, only selected categories - including civil servants and posted workers, persons who intend to return within two years, students and similar, as well as their partners - have voting and candidacy rights. In European parliament elections, only permanent residents in another EU Member State have voting and candidacy rights. If residents elsewhere, only selected categories can vote and stand for elections - including civil servants and posted workers, persons who intend to return within 2 years, students and similar, as well as their partners. The voter registration is not automatic; active registration is required for everyone except for civil servants. Danish abroad can vote remotely in-person at diplomatic missions or by post (only through specified polling stations abroad).

Non-citizen residents from the EU have the right to vote and to stand as candidates in local elections and European Parliament elections. However, EU citizens residing in the Faroe Islands and Greenland are not enfranchised in European Parliament elections. Voter registration is automatic in local elections, while in European Parliament elections a one-off, active registration is required.

Table 1. Conditions for electoral rights of non-resident citizens and non-citizen residents

Type of voter	Election type	Right Voting	Right Candidacy	Automatic registration	Remote voting
Non-resident citizens	National Legislative	NO ¹	NO ²	NO ³	YES ⁴
Non-resident citizens	European Parliament	NO ⁵	NO ⁶	NO ⁷	YES ⁸
Non-citizen residents	Local Legislative	YES	YES	YES	NA
Non-citizen residents	Local Mayoral	NA ⁹	NA ¹⁰	NA	NA
Non-citizen residents	European Parliament	YES ¹¹	YES ¹²	NO ¹³	NA

¹ Except selected categories, including civil servants and posted workers, persons who intend to return within 2 years, students and similar, as well as their partners.

² Except selected categories, including civil servants and posted workers, persons who intend to return within 2 years, students and similar, as well as their partners.

³ Active registration is required for everyone except civil servants, by request to the previous local authorities.

⁴ In-country voting. Personal voting at diplomatic missions and postal voting (only through specified polling stations abroad).

⁵ No, unless permanent residents in another EU Member State. If resident elsewhere only selected categories can vote, including civil servants and posted workers, persons who intend to return within 2 years, students and similar, as well as their partners.

⁶ No, unless permanent residents in another EU Member State. If resident elsewhere only selected categories can stand in elections, including civil servants and posted workers, persons who intend to return within 2 years, students and similar, as well as their partners.

⁷ Active registration is required for everyone except civil servants, by request to the previous local authorities.

⁸ In-country voting. Personal voting at diplomatic missions and postal voting (only through specified polling stations abroad).

⁹ Indirect election of mayor.

¹⁰ Indirect election of mayor.

¹¹ EU citizens residing in the Faroe Islands and Greenland are not enfranchised in EP elections.

¹² EU citizens residing in the Faroe Islands and Greenland are not enfranchised in EP elections.

¹³ One-off active registration procedure: first time voters are included in the electoral register upon request.

Elections are cornerstones of Danish democracy, and a stable and high turnout indicates strong democratic legitimacy. The free mobility of European Union citizens constitutes a larger and larger group of eligible EU citizens in Denmark. This report describes the voting conditions facing this group, and the group of Danish citizens who live abroad – the non-resident Danish citizens. This perspective on electoral behavior is interesting, as these groups constitute an increasing share of voters to the Danish local and regional elections and the elections for the European Parliament. Therefore their turnout becomes more and more important for the general turnout in the different elections.

The governmental organization Statistics Denmark collects background data of CPR-registered citizens (a personal identification number issued to all with residence in Denmark). The data on turnout behavior of all eligible individuals are collected directly from the official voter list at the 1,387 polling stations around the country (Hansen 2018¹⁴). The voter lists are merged with Statistics Denmark's complete set of socio-demographic variables and are depersonalized, which makes it possible to provide an almost perfect picture of the turnout in Denmark across elections and voters. This also means that over-reporting or self-selection – as is the case with self-reported turnout in surveys – are avoided.

In the following sections, the political participation of the mobile EU citizens from Denmark and other EU countries are described to gain an insight into the requirements they face, the information they provide and their turnout in different Danish elections. The general aim is to provide an overview of the democratic participation of the two groups and the obstacles they face in exercising their electoral rights.

1.1. Demographic Characteristics of Non-citizen Residents and Non-resident Citizens

In the following sections, the groups of non-citizen residents and non-resident citizens are described with focus on the size of the groups and the composition across gender and age, employment status, and main sectors of work. Non-citizen residents are conceptualized as non-Danish citizens living permanently in Denmark. Non-resident citizens are conceptualized as Danish citizens living outside Denmark permanently, both in the European Union and outside.

Non-citizen Residents

The characteristics of non-citizen residents are different from the Danes with Danish citizenship. The Danish Government issues social security numbers, CPR-numbers, for all permanent residents in Denmark if they apply for it, regardless of their citizenship status. This allows an overview of the group of non-citizen residents and their turnout. Statistics Denmark distinguishes the non-citizen residents between non-western immigrants/descendants and western immigrants/descendants. Western refers to countries inside the EU, and additionally Andorra, Australia, Canada, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Monaco, New Zealand, Norway, San Marino, Switzerland, United States and the Vatican State. Non-western refers to all countries not mentioned in the list of western countries. The term 'immigrants' refers to people who were born outside Denmark, meanwhile descendants refer to the children of two immigrants. If one of the parents is born in Denmark and is a Danish

¹⁴ Møller Hansen, Kasper (2018). Valgdeltagelsen ved kommunal- og regionsvalget 2017. CVAP Working Paper Series 1/2018, retrieved from https://cvap.polsci.ku.dk/publikationer/arbejdspapirer/2017/KV_RV17_valgdeltagelse.pdf

citizen, the children will be categorized as Danish.¹⁵

In the first quarter of 2018 the number of immigrants has been calculated to be 250,764 from western countries, meanwhile the number of descendants from western countries is 29,518 (respectively 4.33% and 0.51% of the population). For non-Western immigrants and descendants the numbers are respectively 346,154 and 150,993 people (respectively 5.98% and 2.61% of the population). All of these numbers include children. However, as this report focuses on the political participation of EU citizens in Denmark, the emphasis will be on describing their characteristics, electoral rights and voting behavior. The Copenhagen based think-tank *Tænketanken Europa* has calculated that 179,989 EU citizens were able to vote in the last local and regional elections on November 21 2017.¹⁶ Another estimate of EU citizen voters were made by the Danish organization of the local governments in Denmark, Local Government Denmark (KL). This organization has published a report describing the characteristics of the EU citizens who were able to vote in Denmark for the local and regional elections in November 2017.¹⁷ According to their data-collection, there were 199,221 EU citizens entitled to vote for the local and regional elections right before the election in 2017. Since the last local election in 2013, the number has risen by approximately 32.2%.

In terms of the regional concentration of people from western countries in Denmark, 44.2% live in the capital region, 19.9% live in the middle region of Jutland, and 18.8% live in Southern Denmark. This is different from the entire population where fewer people live in the capital region and more in the other regions, as only 31.5% of the entire population lives in the capital region. The numbers are very similar for the citizens from non-western countries, but compared with Danish citizens there is an overrepresentation in the capital region and an underrepresentation in the rest of the five Danish Regions.¹⁸ The non-citizen residents in Denmark are mostly from the following countries, starting with the country with the largest share of the population: Turkey (1.1%), Poland (0.81%), Syria (0.72%), Germany (0.58%), Iraq (0.56%), Romania (0.52%), Lebanon (0.46%), Pakistan (0.44%), Bosnia-Herzegovina (0.4%), Somalia (0.37%), Iran (0.36%), Afghanistan (0.32%), Norway (0.3%), United Kingdom (0.29%), Sweden (0.28%), Vietnam (0.27%), former Yugoslavia (0.26%) and Lithuania (0.25%).¹⁹

There are slightly more males in the group of non-citizen residents from the EU, 52.7% are men and 47.3% are women.. The non-citizen residents from the EU are generally younger than the Danish citizens. The group of 20-39 year olds from EU28 countries is relatively large, 48% compared to 25.2% in the same age-group for the entire Danish population. The group of under 20 years old is smaller in the group of EU28 citizens compared to the entire population, and the same is true for the group of older than 39 years old. This implies that the group of students of higher education and workers of the non-citizens from EU28 are larger in the group of EU 28 residents compared to the entire Danish population's age distribution.

The employment status of the EU28 citizens in Denmark is overall equivalent with

¹⁵ Danish Statistical Agency (2018), retrieved from <https://www.dst.dk/da/Statistik/emner/befolkning-og-valg/indvandrerere-og-efterkommere/indvandrerere-og-efterkommere>

¹⁶ Think Tank Europa (2017). 179.989 EU-BORGERE KAN STEMME VED KOMMUNALVALGET, retrieved from http://thinkeuropa.dk/sites/default/files/notat_eu-borgere_kan_stemme_ved_kommunalvalget.pdf

¹⁷ https://www.kl.dk/ImageVaultFiles/id_84512/cf_202/Karakteristik_af_stemmeberettigede_EU-borgere.PDF

¹⁸ Danish Statistical Agency (2018), retrieved from <http://www.statistikbanken.dk/statbank5a/default.asp?w=1440>

¹⁹ Danish Statistical Agency (2018), retrieved from <http://www.statistikbanken.dk/statbank5a/default.asp?w=1440>

Danish citizens, but the EU28 citizens have a higher middle wage than Danish citizens.²⁰

Local Government Denmark (KL) last measured the main sectors of work for EU28 citizens before the local elections in November 2017.²¹ 45% of the EU28 citizens living in Denmark have not outlined their employment status, which might be because of the large share of students in higher education within the group. The group of part-time workers is also included in this percentage. Around 22,000 people are employed in the trade and transport sector, which is 12.7% of the entire group of EU28 citizens in Denmark. Around 10% are employed in the sectors of labor service. The Danish *Ugebrevet A4* claims a different composition of working sectors in which more are employed in the maintenance and cleaning sectors, but this specifications includes those others than EU28 citizens, and people with dual citizenship, which might lead to the difference and uncertainty in the numbers when compared with KL's estimations.²²

Non-resident Citizens

There are relatively few assessments of the number of Danish citizens living abroad. Statistics Denmark, the central authority on Danish statistics, made an estimation of the number of Danish citizens living abroad to be approximately 172,000 individuals in January 2013. This group is different compared to the Danish citizens who live in Denmark in terms of both their educational and employment status, and there is a difference in the gender composition as well. The estimation by Statistics Denmark is, however, only based on the group of citizens abroad in the age group of 25-64 years old, which implies that the following numbers should be seen with this reservation.²³ Only citizens who have emigrated by the age of 25 years and who have not returned before the age of 65 are included in the analysis by Statistics Denmark. This limit attaches a considerable degree of uncertainty to the number of non-resident citizens mentioned above, and the division on gender, education, age, employment status and main sectors of work. As the size of the group of non-resident citizens and their characteristics are not well measured in statistics or literature, the report from the Statistics Denmark are used, but bearing these uncertainties in mind. Statistics Denmark did a broader study in 2012, where it was underlined that the number of non-resident citizens was around 172,000 as well, and it is stated in this paper that the number has been relatively stable since 2002.²⁴ The problem with estimating the number of non-resident citizens is further exacerbated by the fact that when the non-resident citizens move back to Denmark, they do not necessarily have to inform the Danish authorities.

The number encompasses all non-resident citizens living abroad, not only the Danish citizens who live and work in the European Union. The Danish non-resident citizens are however mostly concentrated in countries inside the European Union and in the United States according to Statistics Denmark. In 2012, the countries where most of the Danish non-resident citizens live were Sweden, Norway, United Kingdom, United States and Germany. However, Statistics Denmark only has data on which country the citizen moves to from Denmark and cannot monitor any further relocations of the individual Danish citizen. Therefore it is not possible to include the non-resident citizens' relocations in the statistics,

²⁰ RESUMÉ: Kortlægning af udenlandsk arbejdskraft (2017), retrieved from

<https://bm.dk/media/6163/overligning-notat-om-kortlaegning-af-udenlandsk-arbejdskraft.pdf>

²¹ https://www.kl.dk/ImageVaultFiles/id_84512/cf_202/Karakteristik_af_stemmeberettigede_EU-borgere.PDF

²² Rekord-mange udenlandske statsborgere arbejder i Danmark (2017), retrieved from

https://www.ugebreveta4.dk/rekord-mange-udenlandske-statsborgere-arbejder-i-danm_20732.aspx

²³ Danish Statistical Agency (2018), retrieved from <http://www.dst.dk/pukora/epub/Nyt/2013/NR612.pdf>

²⁴ Danish Statistical Agency (2018), retrieved from <http://www.dst.dk/pukora/epub/Nyt/2012/NR591.pdf>

which make the assessment subject to uncertainty.²⁵

The gender characteristics of the non-resident citizens show how men are in the majority, but Statistics Denmark have not specified how large the difference is. However, the age perspective is detailed further. As the concept of non-resident citizens in the assessment of Statistics Denmark only includes citizens who have been in Denmark and then afterwards emigrate, there is an under-representation of children in the group of non-resident citizens. Furthermore, the non-resident citizens group contains an over-representation of citizens aged 27-71 who constitute 72% of the non-resident group compared to 53% of the citizens inside Denmark.²⁶

The group of non-resident citizens is in general more educated than the average Danish resident citizen. The percentage of individuals that have completed further education such as university is 21% of the group of non-resident citizens compared to 10% of the Danish citizens in Denmark. In addition, only 24% of the non-resident citizens have vocational training compared to 39% of the Danish citizens inside Denmark, and the share of citizens who have fulfilled basic education as their highest education is smaller than in the group of Danish citizens living in Denmark.²⁷ In general, there is an over-representation of people with high school, bachelor's degree, further education and business college education in the non-resident group than compared with the representation of the different educational clusters in the group of Danish citizens living in Denmark. Altogether, the educational level in the group of non-resident citizens is higher than in the group of Danish citizens in general. The non-resident citizens might furthermore have undertaken further education outside Denmark, but they appear in the statistics with the education acknowledged before leaving Denmark.

The non-resident citizens' employment status and main sectors of work is subject to many uncertainties and missing data as well. However, the percentage of employed non-resident citizens is conservatively estimated to be around 70% based on specification of the employment participation rate of European citizens by OECD, as there is no exact data on the employment status of the non-resident citizens.²⁸ Statistics Denmark has not collected data on the main sectors of work for the non-resident citizens, and it is not possible to find data on this topic. However, as the non-resident citizens are generally better educated than the Danish citizens living in Denmark, their main sectors of work might reflect this difference.

1.2. Summary of the Electoral Rights of Non-citizen Residents and Non-resident Citizens

The provisions of electoral rights are included in the Danish Constitution's paragraphs 29 and 30, and described further in the electoral laws, which are updated often with small changes. The electoral rights of non-citizen residents from the EU and non-resident citizens are different from the electoral rights of Danish citizens living in Denmark. Overall, the right to vote in Danish elections depends on permanent residence (domicile) in Denmark. For

²⁵ Agenda (2014), Tusindvis af danskere arbejder i udlandet, retrieved from <http://www.agenda.dk/2014/01/tusindvis-arbejder-i-udlandet/>

²⁶ Danish Statistical Agency (2018), retrieved from <http://www.dst.dk/pukora/epub/Nyt/2012/NR591.pdf>

²⁷ Danish Statistical Agency (2018), retrieved from <http://www.dst.dk/pukora/epub/Nyt/2012/NR591.pdf>

²⁸ Agenda (2014), Tusindvis af danskere arbejder i udlandet, retrieved from <http://www.agenda.dk/2014/01/tusindvis-arbejder-i-udlandet/>

national elections you also need Danish citizenship.²⁹ This also applies to non-resident citizens. The electoral age in Denmark is 18 years old, and this requirement applies to all groups of citizens and residents. In the following sections the differences in electoral rights for non-citizen residents and non-resident citizens are described. Furthermore, the electoral rights for third-country nationals are specified.

Non-citizen Residents

Different rules apply to EU citizens and third-country nationals in relation to how long the individuals have been residing in Denmark. In national elections, it is a requirement for all groups of residents with origin other than Danish to have gained Danish citizenship by law and to have a registered Danish address.³⁰ For local and regional elections and elections for the European Parliament, the criterion of Danish citizenship does not apply. In the following paragraphs, the different types of elections are listed, along with the rules applying to different groups of non-citizen residents.

To become a voter, the resident must be registered in the Danish CPR-register with a Danish address, with some exceptions related to criminal records. When the resident has a permanent address in Denmark, he or she will automatically get a polling card by mail. Danish elections take place in public institutions such as public schools or sports facilities in the Danish municipalities.³¹ The voting process is anonymous, as the voter enters a small box to tick his or hers preferred party or candidate.³² This polling process is the same in all elections, but whom possesses electoral rights differs as described in the following. The above-described voting process applies to all elections in Denmark. Furthermore, absentees can vote either at a Danish embassy, or in a public institution (e.g. city halls). People with disabilities are allowed to vote from home by request. In such a case two civil servants from the municipal will go to collect the vote.

The electoral rights for national elections to the Parliament only apply to residents with Danish citizenship. Citizenship can be gained through naturalization and it is possible to apply for citizenship after approximately 9 years of permanent residence in Denmark if you meet a list of requirements.³³ By getting Danish citizenship, the new citizen will possess all the rights of the Danish citizens.³⁴ It is possible to become an eligible candidate for national elections only if you have Danish citizenship. The electoral rights for referendums applies also only to residents with Danish citizenship.

The electoral rights in local and regional elections are in general less restricted regarding the groups of non-citizen residents. EU citizens and citizens from Greenland, the Faroe Islands, Iceland or Norway have the same electoral rights as Danish citizens for local and regional elections. However, they have to be permanent residents, which means that the resident has been in Denmark for at least three weeks before the election takes place. For third-country nationals, the electoral rights to local and regional elections are gained after

²⁹ Retsinformation, retrieved from <https://www.retsinformation.dk/Forms/R0710.aspx?id=194769#id030e26f8-ed93-4e81-830c-af6711655bed>

³⁰ Retsinformation, retrieved from <https://www.retsinformation.dk/Forms/R0710.aspx?id=194769#id030e26f8-ed93-4e81-830c-af6711655bed>

³¹ Ersbøll, Eva (2013). Access to Electoral Rights: Denmark. EUDO Citizenship Report. RSCAS/EUDO-CIT-ER 2013/7, retrieved from http://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/29809/ER_2013_07-DK-FRACIT.pdf?sequence=1

³² Retsinformation, retrieved from <https://www.retsinformation.dk/Forms/R0710.aspx?id=194769#id030e26f8-ed93-4e81-830c-af6711655bed>

³³ <https://www.borger.dk/samfund-og-rettigheder/Dansk-statsborgerskab/Krav-til-nye-statsborgere>

³⁴ Retsinformation, retrieved from <https://www.retsinformation.dk/Forms/R0710.aspx?id=28974>

three years of permanent residence.³⁵ However, the polling cards are in Danish, which might make it more difficult for the non-citizen residents who have not mastered the Danish language yet. The right to run for office applies to all who have electoral rights under the same circumstances as mentioned above. The candidates will appear on the lists, often as eligible for a particular party.

The electoral rights to the European Parliament are possessed by all EU citizens residing in Denmark, and to the residents who have electoral rights in the national elections, and thereby by implication have Danish citizenship. It is again only possible to run for elections if the resident has electoral rights to the elections for the European Parliament. It is thereby implied that third-country nationals only have electoral rights for the European Parliament elections *if* they have been naturalized.

Non-resident Citizens

There is a difference in the electoral rights of Danish citizens abroad depending on their time of residence in another country and regarding the reason why they are residing outside Denmark. The following categories of Danish citizens have the same electoral rights as Danish citizens residing in Denmark in national elections and referendums and EP-elections. Danish citizens who are intending to return with 2 years:³⁶

- posted abroad by Danish authorities,
- residing abroad for educational purposes,
- working abroad for an international organization that Denmark is a member of,
- abroad for health purposes.

And their partners.

Danish citizens living outside Denmark who fulfill one of the above requirements have to register on the voting list; they are not automatically added to the list.³⁷ If Danish citizens do not fall in one of the categories listed above and reside outside Denmark for more than two years, they are not able to vote, as they cannot be admitted to the electoral register if they do not have a Danish address anymore and are not registered as residents in Denmark.³⁸

The only difference in the electoral rights of the non-resident citizens residing inside the EU and in third countries is for elections to the European Parliament, in which Danish citizens in other EU countries can vote in the Danish elections to the European Parliament *or* in their country of residence's EP elections. Citizens residing outside the EU can only vote in EP elections if added to the voter list (by application) if they fulfill one of the above criteria. Danish citizens with permanent residents in another EU Member State can apply to be added to the voter list and thus able to vote for EP election in Denmark.³⁹

The rules for electoral rights applying to Danish citizens abroad are very strict compared to the law of the other European countries, as permanent residency in Denmark is

³⁵ Retsinformation, retrieved from <https://www.retsinformation.dk/Forms/R0710.aspx?id=200286>

³⁶ Retsinformation, retrieved from <https://www.retsinformation.dk/Forms/r0710.aspx?id=194769#id030e26f8-ed93-4e81-830c-af6711655bed>

³⁷ Økonomi- og Indenrigsministeriet (2018), retrieved from <https://valg.oim.dk/vaelgere/udlandsdanskere-valgret/eu-bosatte-danskere-valgret-til-europa-parlamentsvalg/>

³⁸ <https://jyllands-posten.dk/politik/ECE7792330/op-mod-160000-udenlandsdanskere-maa-ikke-stemme-torsdag/>

³⁹ Økonomi- og Indenrigsministeriet (2018), retrieved from <https://valg.oim.dk/Vaelgere/Udlandsdanskere-valgret.aspx>

assigned a high importance.⁴⁰

2. Non-national EU Citizens' Franchise in EP and Local Elections

The non-national EU citizens' franchise in the EP, local and regional elections are described in the following sections. In general, they possess the same electoral rights as the Danish citizens living in Denmark, if they have registered as permanent residents with a Danish address to the national registration office. Furthermore, third country nationals possess the rights to vote in the local and regional elections after three years of permanent residence, but not in the EP elections, as they are not EU-citizens before they have naturalized.

2.1 Overview of Relevant Administrative Regulations

In this section, the practical settings before and at the Election Day are described. There are different decrees and circulars asserting the rules and procedures regarding the EP, local and regional elections in Denmark. The ones relevant for the non-citizen residents from the EU and third country nationals' electoral rights are described in the following section.

EP Elections

The electoral system in Denmark is the same wherever in the country the polling takes place, and no matter which council or parliament the election is for. However, there are differences in the rights to vote regarding the different kinds of elections, as described in 1.2.1 and 1.2.2. For the EP elections the non-citizen residents from EU countries are automatically registered as voters and are able to participate in the EP elections either in their home country or in the Danish election for the EP. As the electoral law of Denmark states, EU citizens over the age of 18 who have registered as residents through the Danish national registration office are able to vote for the EP elections in Denmark *or* in their home country.⁴¹ EU citizens residing in Denmark who are registered as residents receive a polling card by mail automatically and show it at the polling station to get the ballot paper.

A decree establishes how the polling will proceed and who is responsible for which parts of making the elections run in a correct, safe and anonymous way at the polling station. The local authorities are set in charge of all the practical tasks prior to the Election Day, such as registration of all the voters on the electoral lists and constituting the electoral committee of the particular municipality. This is the practice in all the Danish municipalities. Before each election, the government assigns the tasks and sets deadlines etc. in a written guidance.⁴²

Local Elections

The tasks and completion of the election process is the same for the local and regional elections as for the EP elections. However, the group of non-citizens who are able to vote is larger for the local and regional elections than for the EP elections, where only EU citizens have the electoral rights. The practice is nevertheless the same.

⁴⁰ Jyllands-Posten (2015), Op mod 160.000 udenlandsdanskere må ikke stemme torsdag, retrieved from <https://jyllands-posten.dk/politik/ECE7792330/op-mod-160000-udenlandsdanskere-maa-ikke-stemme-torsdag/>

⁴¹ Retsinformation, retrieved from <https://www.retsinformation.dk/forms/R0710.aspx?id=9044>

⁴² Retsinformation, retrieved from <https://www.retsinformation.dk/Forms/R0710.aspx?id=162705>

2.2 Voter Registration

In the following section the non-national EU citizens' voter registration process is described. It is the same process in all of the Danish regions, and the registration process is overall very simple, as EU citizens will automatically be added to the electoral list if they are registered as residents in Denmark in the CPR-register, and thereby have a personal Danish identification number.

EP Elections

The non-national EU citizens are automatically registered in the electoral register, if they have a Danish CPR-number and are registered as residents with an address in Denmark. EU citizens have to register as residents before they have lived in Denmark for three months, but they can do it earlier as well.⁴³ Thereby the voter registration for the election runs automatically, even if the non-national EU citizens move address in Denmark.⁴⁴ For administrative purposes residents registered their address and get a CPR-number less than three weeks prior before the election and not able to vote in the particular election. This time limit applies to Danish citizens moving address in Denmark or moving from another country to Denmark as well. If residents do not reregister, they might have to vote in their former region or municipality, but they do *not* lose their electoral rights for the particular election.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, if a voter by mistake do not receive the polling card they can still just show up a polling station and vote.

It has to be pointed out that EU citizens either can vote in their home country's EP election *or* the Danish EP elections. Therefore they might choose which country they want to participate in and therefore not necessarily use their electoral rights in Denmark.⁴⁶

In 2017, there was 199,221 EU-citizens who had registered in the Danish CPR-register and thereby were able to vote in the elections for the EP and in local and regional elections as well. The official number of EU citizens in Denmark is based on the CPR-registration, and this number therefore summarizes the number of voters in the Danish EP, local and regional elections.⁴⁷

The voter registration is very easy given that it corresponds to the overall registration in the Danish system, which also gives access to health rights. This is the only process EU citizens have to get through to become voters and to be registered on the electoral lists.

Local Elections

There are no differences in registration for the EP and the local and regional elections as it is the local authority that makes the electoral lists based on the CPR register in both cases. The 199,221 EU-citizens who were registered by the Danish authorities in the CPR-register in 2017 were the actual number able to vote in the last local and regional elections in November 2017.⁴⁸

⁴³ Work in Denmark Website (2018), retrieved from <https://www.workindenmark.dk/Moving-to-DK/Important-registrations/Citizens-from-EU-EEA-or-Switzerland>

⁴⁴ <https://www.borger.dk/udlaendinge-i-danmark/Nyttig-information-til-udlaendinge/Valgret-og-valgbarhed-for-udlaendinge>

⁴⁵ Work in Denmark Website (2018), retrieved from <https://www.workindenmark.dk/Moving-to-DK/Important-registrations/Citizens-from-EU-EEA-or-Switzerland>

⁴⁶ Retsinformation, retrieved from <https://www.retsinformation.dk/forms/R0710.aspx?id=9044>

⁴⁷ http://www.kl.dk/ImageVaultFiles/id_84512/cf_202/Karakteristik_af_stemmeberettigede_EU-borgere.PDF

⁴⁸ https://www.kl.dk/ImageVaultFiles/id_84512/cf_202/Karakteristik_af_stemmeberettigede_EU-borgere.PDF

Furthermore, there is a practical obstacle regarding the polling card, which all citizens and residents with electoral rights to the particular EP, local and regional elections receive by mail. It is *always* written in Danish. This might make it harder to understand the electoral process in the Danish context, as the resident might not understand the information provided on the polling card.

2.3 Information during Election Campaigns

The government is aware of the fact that the EU citizen residents in Denmark might not be able to comprehend information about the elections in Danish. However, the information provided in English as well as other European languages is very limited, as described in the following sections.

EP Elections

The authorities and some nongovernmental organizations provide information to inform EU citizens about their electoral rights to the EP elections in several ways. It is possible to find information about the elections on several Danish authorities' websites when an election is forthcoming, and most of the different Danish parties running for elections distribute information folders in English in the public space as well. The parties' webpages can however not always be viewed in English, and never in other languages, which might make the decision-making more difficult, as the information about political focal points are sparse. A quick search online by the author shows that only four of nine parties represented in the Danish Parliament (the Liberals, the Red-Green Alliance, the Alternative, and the Social Liberal Party) provide information in English on their website. The information in English provided by the four parties is nevertheless very limited (only one or two pages) compared to the information provided in Danish.

The municipalities often arrange election meetings in English for all residents who are not familiar with speaking and understanding Danish yet. In Copenhagen, the election meetings have been conducted by the municipality with both politicians and electoral specialists prior to the last several elections to both EP, local and regional elections.

The Danish council for ethnic minorities (Rådet for Etniske Minoriteter) provides a guide describing how to vote in the Danish context to all who are new to the Danish electoral system. This guide can be found in public libraries, language schools, international meeting points and online, but new paper copies of the guide are only issued when there is an upcoming election.⁴⁹ The guide is in a lot of different languages including English, German and French, as the target group is all ethnic minority residents, not only the ones from the EU.

The International House in Copenhagen, the city where most EU citizens reside, also arranges electoral meetings for EU citizens and others who wants to hear about the elections in English. The meetings have an international or EU-focused framing.

The website Stem.dk (a Get-Out-The-Vote (GOTV)-mobilization website owned by local Government Denmark) also provides information in English for the EU citizens in Denmark. It usually opens up a couple of months before the Election Day to make sure the newest updated information is available. This website normally has a sub-menu in English with general information about the electoral system in Denmark and how the parties are

⁴⁹ Rådet for Etniske Minoriteter, retrieved from <http://rem.dk/radet/publikationer/det-er-dit-valg-2017-1>

placed on a general economic redistributive policy scale. The Stem.dk's webpage also provides a link to the brochure explaining the process election in Denmark developed by the Danish council of ethnic minorities.

Local or national authorities and other organizations concerned with electoral turnout in different socio-demographic groups sometimes also send an SMS reminder about upcoming elections to EU citizens. However, these SMS-messages have been in Danish in all former elections, which might make this reminder somewhat useless to the group of EU citizens who are not familiar with Danish. Furthermore, to receive this type of message EU citizens need to have a Danish phone number registered in their own name.⁵⁰

Furthermore it is possible that the EU citizens residing in Denmark have their own Facebook network, or are networking on other websites and thereby get information about the EP elections. They might also collect news about the EP election in their home country, but as they have to choose whether they want to vote in the Danish EP elections *or* their home country's EP elections the information about the election in Denmark provided by their home countries' media might be sparse. This might be an incentive for EU citizens residing in Denmark to vote in their home country rather than in the Danish EP elections, as it is much easier to consult information in their own language, for example about party programmes, in their home country.

In general, there is information provided to the EU citizens about voting in the Danish EP elections. However, most information is provided in Danish. Some information is provided in English but not in other European languages, which might be an obstacle for groups of EU citizens in Denmark who speak neither English nor Danish.

Local Elections

The information provided to EU citizens residing in Denmark for local and regional elections are very similar to what is described above for the EP elections. However, the information might be even sparser as it is the local party groups who provide the material about the special local issues and the party's own key issues as well. Therefore the parties might not prioritize their funds for election material in English or other European languages, as their budgets are quite small. Some of the parties however have a small leaflet about their key issues in English, but not with the same scope as what they provide in Danish.

There is however general information available in English from the Danish Ministry of Economy and Domestic Affairs⁵¹, and by some of the municipalities such as Aarhus, which has made an information webpage in English for the residents of foreign origin in the Aarhus municipality in relation to the local and regional elections in November 2017.⁵²

Information about local elections in languages other than Danish is therefore very limited, both online and offline, especially regarding the parties' key electoral issues.

⁵⁰ Bhatti, Yosef et al. (2014). Mobilisering via SMS til Europaparlamentsvalget 25. maj 2014. CVAP Working Paper Series 5/2014, retrieved from https://cvap.polsci.ku.dk/publikationer/arbejdspapirer/2014/SMS-eksperiment_ved_EP-valget_final.pdf, p. 6-7

⁵¹ Greater Aarhus (2018), Elections in Denmark, retrieved from <https://elections.oim.dk/local-elections/>

⁵² New Citizen (2018), Elections in Denmark, retrieved from <http://www.newcitizen.dk/da/Living-in/Society-and-economy/Democracy-and-elections/Elections-in-Denmark.aspx>

2.4 Political Parties and Candidacy Rights

The following sections describe the political parties' missing focus on EU citizens in elections, as well as the opportunities for EU citizens to run as candidate for Danish EP elections, and local and regional elections.

EP Elections

The political parties in Denmark do not target EU citizens with special campaigns or special informational leaflets for any of the elections. At the same time, they provide some information in English to reach out to the voters who do not speak Danish in general as described in section 2.3.

Political parties in Denmark have seldom had candidates from other European countries on their candidate lists for the EP elections. At the last EP election in 2014, no candidates were from other EU countries.

As a non-national candidate the conditions for registering are the same as for the national candidates. Either you have to be admitted to a Danish political party's candidacy list, or you have start a new party and afterwards collect signatures of 2% of the valid votes cast at the last national elections, which is equivalent to 70,380 signatures calculated from the national election in 2015, to be able to appear on the candidate list at the Election Day.⁵³

Local Elections

Like in the EP elections, the Danish political parties have not had a specific campaign or anything for EU citizen in the local elections; instead they have a limited offer of general information about their key issues in English.

There has been a limited number of non-citizen candidates on the parties' candidate lists in recent years. To date, only a few non-citizen candidates have declared their candidacy in the local and regional elections and only one has been elected to the regional councils in Denmark.⁵⁴ An exception is the Schleswig Party, which has a few Germans elected in the municipalities of Southern Jutland, as there is a German minority in these municipalities. The Schleswig Party is pre-registered for the elections and candidates do not have to collect signatures to be added to the ballot lists in the municipalities of Tønder, Sønderborg, Aabenraa and Haderslev in Southern Jutland.⁵⁵

The conditions for registering as a non-national candidate are the same as for Danish citizens if the resident is from the EU or has been a permanent resident in Denmark for three years. It is even easier than registering for candidacy in the EP elections, as you do not need the same amount of signatures, unless you want to be admitted to one of the well-established parties' candidate lists. The candidate has to state his or her candidature in the municipality he or she lives in, or in the region he or she lives in if the resident want to be a candidate for the regional election and not the local. Between 25 and 150 signatures are needed to become a candidate for the local elections with a new party or as an independent candidate, and 50 signatures are needed to be a candidate in the regional elections.⁵⁶

⁵³ Valgresultat valg 2015, <http://www.valg-2015.dk/valgresultat-valg-2015/>

⁵⁴ The Local (2017), EU citizens don't realise they have a vote: Romanian candidate in Danish election, <https://www.thelocal.dk/20171013/eu-citizens-dont-realise-they-have-a-vote-romanian-candidate-in-danish-election>

⁵⁵ Slesvigsk Parti (2018) <https://slesvigsk-parti.dk/byraad.70377.aspx>

⁵⁶ Retsinformation, retrieved from <https://www.retsinformation.dk/Forms/R0710.aspx?id=200286>

Altogether there is very limited information provided by the Danish political parties about the local and regional elections in English. At the same time, it is quite easy to become a candidate for local or regional elections.

2.5 Turnout

It is worth remarking that Denmark collects very detailed data about electoral turnout covering different groups in the society, including EU citizens residing in Denmark. In the following sections the differences between the turnout of EU citizens, third country nationals and Danish citizens is examined.

EP Elections

An academic report has examined the turnout for different socio-demographic groups at the last EP elections in 2014, covering the register data and turnout for residents of 61 out of Denmark's 98 municipalities. The report showed that residents from the "old" EU countries have a higher turnout than Danish citizens, regardless of their citizenship status (see Table 1). The "old" EU-countries are the EU15, and the "new" EU-countries are countries that entered the EU after the EU15. The ethnic Danish citizens had a turnout of 57.8%, while the Danish citizens from the "old" EU-countries had a 60.1% turnout and the non-citizens had a turnout of 67.3%. Hence, the non-citizens have considerably higher turnout than the Danes. The residents from the "new" EU countries have a lower turnout: 44.4% for those with Danish citizenship and 48.1% for those without citizenship.⁵⁷

For comparison, the residents from non-western third-countries have a much lower turnout of 22.8% for residents with citizenship and 33.5% for the residents without citizenship. In that light, the EU citizens' turnout is very good, even though the turnout of around 60% is much lower than for the national, local or regional elections, but this is a general pattern.

The Danish media have not placed a special focus on the turnout of EU citizens for EP elections, but the authors of the report referred to are concerned about the lower turnout of the residents from the "new" EU countries, as this group is growing in size.

⁵⁷ Bhatti, Yosef et al. (2014). Hvem stemte til EP-valget 2014? Valgdeltagelsen ved Europa-Parlamentsvalget 25. maj 2014. Beskrivende analyser af valgdeltagelsen baseret på registerdata . CVAP Working Paper Series 4/2014, retrieved from https://cvap.polsci.ku.dk/forskning/valgdeltagelse/papers_og_rapporter/EP_rapport_24112014_final.pdf , p. 21

Table 2. Turnout divided by countries of origin at the EP election May 2014⁵⁸

	Danish citizenship		Other citizenship		Total
	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.
Denmark	57.8	2,209,292	65.2	446	57.8
“Old” EU countries	60.1	13,421	67.3	8,032	62.8
“New” EU countries	44.4	6,788	48.1	1,153	45.0
Nordic countries	56.3	2,272	74.3	35	56.6
Other Western countries	57.4	1,294	63.6	77	57.8
Non-Western countries	22.8	89,467	33.5	1,075	23.0
Total	56.5	2,322,534	61.8	10,818	56.5

Local Elections

The most recent election in Denmark was the local and regional election in November 2017. This election’s turnout has been subject to research in 91 of the 98 municipalities in Denmark, for different socio-demographic groups, including the turnout of EU citizens residing in Denmark.⁵⁹ The report showed that the turnout is very different internally in the group of EU citizens residing in Denmark. The residents from the “old” EU countries with Danish citizenship have a high turnout of 72.1%, which is very close to the ethnic Danish citizens’ turnout of 75.2%. The turnout for the residents from the “old” EU countries without Danish citizenship is only 39.7% (see table 2).⁶⁰

It looks even worse for the residents from the “new” EU countries of which the group with Danish citizenship has a turnout of 57.5% and the ones without citizenship only have a turnout of 13.5%. These percentages for the turnout of the residents from the “new” EU countries are very low compared with all the other identified groups, and it is problematic that the group of residents from the “new” EU countries without citizenship do not participate in the local and regional democracy. The turnouts are especially low for the residents from Romania, Lithuania, Poland and Bulgaria without Danish citizenship. These residents often works in the construction sector for shorter periods of time, which might be one of the reasons why this group do not show up for the local and regional elections.⁶¹

The turnout of the residents from the “new” EU countries has fallen with 1.5% meanwhile the group has grown to approximately 25,000 people since the election in 2013. Therefore there is a large potential in mobilizing this group, as it otherwise will pull the overall turnout down.⁶² There has been media coverage of this issue, as it is a democratic problem that EU citizens participate less in the local and regional elections even though they possess electoral rights and are comprised by the local and regional councils’ priorities as residents.⁶³ People and local authorities are aware of the gap in the turnout, and the groups of EU citizens living in Denmark might be subject to mobilization initiatives in the future.

⁵⁸ Bhatti, Yosef et al. (2014).

⁵⁹ Møller Hansen, Kasper (2018).

⁶⁰ Møller Hansen, Kasper (2018), p. 18

⁶¹ Møller Hansen, Kasper (2018).

⁶² Møller Hansen, Kasper (2018), p. 38

⁶³ <https://www.tveast.dk/artikel/udlaendinge-kan-traekke-valgdeltagelsen-ned>

Table 3. Turnout divided by countries of origin at the local election November 2017

	Danish citizenship		Other citizenship		Total
	Pct.	N	Pct.	N	Pct.
Denmark	75.2	3,622,509	55.4	4,686	75.2
“Old” EU countries	72.1	19,838	39.7	76,264	46.4
“New” EU countries	57.5	10,525	13.5	81,615	18.5
Nordic countries	70.8	3,531	43.4	18,910	47.7
Other Western countries	67.2	2,205	40.9	8,661	46.2
Non-Western countries	47.7	162,473	35.9	147,272	42.0
Total	74.0	3,821,081	32.1	337,408	70.6

3. Non-resident Citizens’ Franchise in National and EP Elections when Residing in Other EU Member States

The Danish non-residents face different rules and have other channels of information than the Danish citizens living inside Denmark. However, as they are able to understand the electoral information provided in Danish by the governmental authorities, political parties and NGOs, they have more resources and possibly more incentives for voting than EU residents in Denmark. The latter might face difficulties in understanding the polling cards and other material provided in Danish. The following sections examine the administrative regulations, the registration process and the turnout of the Danish non-resident citizens.

3.1 Overview of Relevant Administrative Regulations

The Danish non-resident citizens possess in general fewer electoral rights compared to Danish citizens *and* EU citizens who live in Denmark. This is the case because residency in Denmark is one of the first requirements mentioned in the Danish electoral law for all kinds of elections, except for EP elections if the citizen lives in one of the other EU countries.⁶⁴ As residency is one of the requirements, the non-resident citizens are not able to vote in the local and regional elections and furthermore only a specific group of non-residents have the electoral rights to vote for national elections.⁶⁵ A non-automatic registration process is furthermore another obstacle for the non-residents’ voting behavior. This is described further in the following sections.

EP Elections

For the EP elections, the Danish non-resident citizens have to be added to the electoral lists of

⁶⁴ Retsinformation, retrieved from <https://www.retsinformation.dk/Forms/R0710.aspx?id=194769#id030e26f8-ed93-4e81-830c-af6711655bed> ; Retsinformation, retrieved from <https://www.retsinformation.dk/forms/R0710.aspx?id=9044>

⁶⁵ Retsinformation, retrieved from <https://www.retsinformation.dk/Forms/R0710.aspx?id=200286>

their former Danish municipality, and this does not happen automatically. Their poll occurs in one of the Danish embassies or consulates in other EU countries by postal vote and thereby is transferred to Denmark to be included in the total turnout. Furthermore this only applies to the non-residents who have chosen to vote in the Danish elections and not in the elections of their country of residence.⁶⁶ If the non-resident citizens are added to the Danish electoral lists, the Danish authorities report it to the authorities of the country of residence to prevent the non-resident citizens from voting twice for the EP. Practically the polling in one of the consulates or embassies of Denmark has to be done a couple of weeks before the Election Day for the EP to make sure the postal vote has reached Denmark and can be counted on the Election Day.

National Elections

The process of voting for the national elections is the same as for the EP elections, if you meet the special requirements to have electoral rights in the national elections. Again the residence plays a significant role in the right to vote for the national elections, and the rule of residence can only be ignored if you meet the special requirements.⁶⁷ These requirements are described further in 3.2.2. However, the postal vote at the embassies or consulates of Denmark is still the only way of voting for non-resident citizens, *if* they have registered as voters with the national registration office.

3.2. Voter Registration

Danish citizens with residence in Denmark are automatically added to the electoral lists of their particular municipality. However, different rules apply to the citizens living abroad. The Danish citizens residing abroad only possess electoral rights in the EP elections and in special cases to the national elections as well. It is not possible to vote in local or regional elections while living abroad as a Danish citizen, because you have to be registered with a Danish address in a Danish municipality to be able to vote in these elections.

EP Elections

Danish citizens who live abroad have the right to vote for EP elections, if they are residents of another EU country. However, if they want to vote in the Danish EP elections, they have to register themselves in the electoral register before the EP election. This is not automatic when Danish citizens are not residents of a Danish municipality but live outside the country. The registration on the electoral list is valid for 2 years, and then the Danish citizen has to register again.⁶⁸ In practice this means that the Danish citizens living in another EU country have to register for every EP election, as there is 5 years between the elections. The Danish citizens have to register at least 7 days before the Election Day with the national registration office, which can be done online.

Danish citizens residing in another EU country can choose to vote in that particular country's EP elections as well, but they may only participate in either the Danish or the other

⁶⁶ Retsinformation, retrieved from <https://www.retsinformation.dk/forms/R0710.aspx?id=9044>

⁶⁷ Retsinformation, retrieved from <https://www.retsinformation.dk/Forms/R0710.aspx?id=194769#id030e26f8-ed93-4e81-830c-af6711655bed>

⁶⁸ Økonomi- og Indenrigsministeriet (2018), retrieved from <https://valg.oim.dk/Vaelgere/Udlandsdanskere-valgret.aspx>

EU country's election, not both.⁶⁹ The voting can happen either by postal mail or at one of the Danish consulates or embassies abroad.

National Elections

As mentioned before, only a specific group of Danish citizens residing abroad have the right to vote in the national elections. The electoral law of Denmark specifies that only Danish citizens who match one of the following criteria are able to vote in national elections. Danish citizens:

- posted abroad by public authorities
- who work for a Danish company based abroad,
- who work for international organizations, which Denmark is a member of,
- who are abroad for educational or health purposes
- who are attached to the state⁷⁰ in similar ways.⁷¹

For this group of people the registration process is the same both for EP elections and for national elections. They can vote at one of the Danish consulates or embassies abroad, or by post. In order to be able to vote, they have to sign up through the national register at least 7 days prior to the elections. In case they are voting by post, their postal vote has to be sent to Denmark in time to be counted with the other postal votes on the Election Day.

3.3. Turnout

The turnout for the group of Danish non-resident citizens living in other EU countries or third countries are not possible to measure as described in the following sections.

EP Elections

There are no statistics or estimates about the turnout of non-resident citizens. The reason for this is that they register through the national registration office, who add the individual resident on the electoral list in the individual's former municipality. Thereby the vote of the Danish non-resident citizens appears in the statistics of the municipality and cannot be isolated from the overall total. Furthermore there has not been any debate on the turnout for the group of citizens who are residents abroad. Altogether there is therefore close to no information about the turnout percentage for the group of Danish non-resident citizens from Statistics Denmark as well as through the CPR-register.

National Elections

As the registration process for the national elections for the Danish non-resident citizens who possess the right to vote in the national elections are the same as for the EP elections, there are no statistics or estimates of the turnout for the group in the national elections as well. There has furthermore not been any significant political debate about the turnout for the group of Danish non-resident citizens.

⁶⁹ Økonomi- og Indenrigsministeriet (2018), retrieved from <https://valg.oim.dk/vaelgere/udlandsdanskernes-valgret/eu-bosatte-danskernes-valgret-til-europa-parlamentsvalg/>

⁷⁰ The author specifies that this means "working for defence or police etc."

⁷¹ Retsinformation, retrieved from <https://www.retsinformation.dk/Forms/R0710.aspx?id=194769#id030e26f8-ed93-4e81-830c-af6711655bed>

4. Conclusion

The voter registration process is quite uncomplicated for the EU citizens residing in Denmark, as they are automatically added to the electoral lists if they have registered as residents with the national registration office and have received a CPR-number. However, EU citizens residing in Denmark face some obstacles in terms of limited information about the EP, local and regional elections. Furthermore, the information on the polling card and accompanying it is in Danish, which make the voting process even more difficult for the EU citizens who are not familiar with the Danish language. Considering that the population base of EU citizens who have electoral rights for EP, local and regional elections in Denmark keeps growing, it would be important to facilitate access to information and to provide more information in English, and maybe in other European languages. For example, polling cards and related information could be provided in both Danish and English. At the same time, micro-targeting specific groups in their own language could be problematic, as some of the mobile EU citizens, who have a sufficient command of Danish to understand the polling card, could feel stigmatized if they were provided with a message in their mother tongue.

EU citizens from the “old” EU countries residing in Denmark generally have a rather high turnout level, in contrast to the residents from the “new” EU countries, who generally have a quite low turnout, especially the residents from Poland, Lithuania, Bulgaria and Romania.⁷² This means that interests of residents from the “new” EU countries might not be represented in the EP, local and regional councils. Moreover, it might decrease the overall turnout in Denmark. As the group of residents from “new” EU countries has grown remarkably the recent years, their low turnout might be an increasing problem, if nothing is done to increase their incentives to vote. Therefore, it might be necessary to make mobilization initiatives targeting residents from the “new” EU countries, either at their workplace (often construction sites) or by making information campaigns in the areas of Denmark where there is a larger concentration of this group.

The mobilization of residents from “new” EU countries can be done in different evidence-based ways, including the following:

- sending SMS-messages in English, as there is repeatedly general evidence supporting an effect of sending SMS-messages to different socio-demographic groups prior to elections.⁷³
- sending out general or specific information in English by mail or by e-mail. This would enable the targeting of specific groups with different kinds of mobilization “stimulus” and to measure the effect of the information campaigns.
- carry out electoral meetings in the areas where residents from “new” EU countries live their everyday life
- provide employers of residents from “new” EU countries with relevant information about the election.
- make mobile polling stations at the workplaces of residents from “new” EU countries or in kindergartens which might improve the incentives to vote, as the group do not

⁷² Bhatti, Yosef et al. (2014). Hvem stemte til EP-valget 2014? Valgdeltagelsen ved Europa-Parlamentsvalget 25. maj 2014. Beskrivende analyser af valgdeltagelsen baseret på registerdata . CVAP Working Paper Series 4/2014, retrieved from

https://cvap.polsci.ku.dk/forskning/valgdeltagelse/papers_og_rapporter/EP_rapport_24112014_final.pdf , p. 21

⁷³ Bhatti, Yosef et al. (2014). Mobilisering via SMS til Europaparlamentsvalget 25. maj 2014. CVAP Working Paper Series 5/2014, retrieved from https://cvap.polsci.ku.dk/publikationer/arbejdspapirer/2014/SMS-eksperiment_ved_EP-valget_final.pdf

have to find out where their polling station.

- provide leaflets with relevant information from Danish political parties about their key issues in English and in other European languages
- provide access to general information about elections and about the importance of voting.

In terms of Danish citizens who live in other EU countries, voter registration rules are stricter. Moreover, information about their turnout and addresses abroad is lacking, unless they have registered at the national registration office to vote.

The Danish non-resident citizens' turnout cannot be measured due to the registration system for citizens who are not registered with a Danish address. The largest obstacle to this group of citizens' electoral behavior is the very strict rules about residence as one of the requirements for the right to vote in national, local and regional elections. Furthermore they have to register themselves on the polling lists through the national registration office, however this is quite easy.⁷⁴ Again, more information about the electoral rights and the option of either voting in the EU country residence or in Denmark for the EP elections might make the non-resident citizens incentive to vote even bigger. To enable a measurement of the turnout of Danish non-resident citizens, the system of registration has to be changed. A change of the system would also enable assessment of how mobilization initiatives targeting this group affect turnout.

It is also worth noting that it is challenging for the local and national governments, NGOs and parties to reach Danes living abroad as it is difficult to get information about where they live after they have de-registered as Danish residents in the national register. Therefore it is difficult to mobilize this group through information mails, SMS messages and other mobilization initiatives specifically targeting the individual Danish citizen abroad. A possible solution could be to send out information through embassies and expat-organizations. However, it would be difficult to determine if these type of measures have had an impact on turnout, especially since there are no separate statistics for this group.

In summary, there is a need for more information, possibly targeted at different groups of citizens, especially residents from "new" EU countries. This growing group of citizens has a very low turnout and would benefit from specific mobilization campaigns.

⁷⁴ Ersbøll, Eva (2013). Access to Electoral Rights: Denmark. EUDO Citizenship Report. RSCAS/EUDO-CIT-ER 2013/7, retrieved from http://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/29809/ER_2013_07-DK-FRACIT.pdf?sequence=1

